

Bus line privatized on April 1

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Bus riders between Vancouver and Nanaimo won't find anything different except the name painted on the bus after April 1.

That's the day Maverick Coach Lines takes over from Pacific Coach Lines as part of the government's privatization plans.

Maverick plans to run "the same buses on the same schedules at the same fares," according to its formal application to the Motor Carrier Commission, a commission spokesman says.

But just what will happen to fares and services on the other parts of PCL operations being privatized the same day isn't yet clear.

Neither The Gray Line of Victoria, which is taking over PCL's Vancouver Island runs,

nor a new company taking over the Victoria-Vancouver service have yet made their formal applications to the commission.

(The commission must receive and approve the applications before any new service can start.)

Three applications have now been received to take over PCL's Fraser Valley services, the commission spokesman said. They are Cascade Charters, of Chilliwack, Vancouver Tours and Transit, of Surrey, and International Bus Company, of Maple Ridge.

The spokesman said it appears the fares these companies want to charge are also almost identical to those charged by PCL. All communities served by PCL will be served by at least one of the companies, and most service will be the same.